

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 04067

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (CARTER, JIMMY)
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT'S VISIT: AGENDA FOR MEETINGS WITH
OTHER LEADERS

REF: STATE 143754

1. I HAVE JUST RETURNED FROM TALK WITH FOREIGN MINISTER GONZALEZ-REVILLA IN WHICH WE DISCUSSED MAIN POINTS OF REFTEL. HE SAID HIS GOVERNMENT HAD NO OBJECTION TO THE FOUR ITEMS MENTIONED IN PARA 2 REFTEL AND WOULD GO ALONG WITH DISCUSSION OF SAME IF OTHER PARTICIPATING GOVERNMENTAL LEADERS AGREED. AT SAME TIME, HE GAVE IT AS HIS STRONG IMPRESSION THAT OTHER LEADERS WOULD PROBABLY BE MORE INTERESTED IN PRIVATE TALKS WITH PRESIDENT CARTER THAN WITH GENERAL SESSIONS THAT WERE UNLIKELY TO PRODUCE ANY REALLY NEW APPROACHES.

2. MINISTER HAS JUST RETURNED FROM MEXICO, AS DEPT. KNOWS. CHANGE OF INSTRUMENTS OF RATIFICATION CEREMONY. BUT HE SAID IT WAS HIS IMPRESSION THAT MEXICAN PRESIDENT INTENDED
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TO RETURN TO HIS OWN CAPITAL IMMEDIATELY AFTER CEREMONY, OR AT LEAST AFTER PUBLIC GATHERING AND SPEECHES IN CINCO DE MAYO PLAZA. HE SAID THAT EARLY DEPARTURE BY MEXICO WOULD SEEM TO ELIMINATE, OR AT LEAST DIMINISH, MUCH OF THE ATTRACTION OF A MULTILATERAL SESSION. GONZALEZ-REVILLA "" SAID IT WAS HIS DISTINCT IMPRESSION THAT MEXICANS SAW NO GREAT VALUE IN GENERAL MULTILATERAL DECLARATION AND WOULD

PROBABLY NOT GO ALONG WITH IDEA. NOR DID THEY FEEL GREAT NEED FOR BILATERAL SESSION AT THIS POINT. LOPEZ PORTILLO GAVE HIM THE FEELING THAT MEXICO WAS QUITE HAPPY WITH STATE OF RELATIONS WITH U.S. AND THAT JOINT COMMISSION WAS ADEQUATELY HANDLING OUR MUTUAL PROBLEMS. MEXICAN LEADER WAS COMING TO PANAMA MERELY AS A COURTESY TO U.S. AND PANAMA ON HISTORIC OCCASION.

3. GONZALEZ-REVILLA ALSO SAID IT WAS HIS IMPRESSION THAT JAMAICAN AND COSTA RICAN LEADERS DID NOT PLAN TO STAY OVERNIGHT AND WOULD BE RETURNING TO RESPECTIVE CAPITALS AFTER PRESIDENTIAL DINNER FRIDAY NIGHT OR EVEN EARLIER. IF THAT INTENTION PREVAILS, ONLY COLOMBIA'S LOPEZ MICHELSEN AND VENEZUELA'S ANDRES PEREZ WOULD BE AVAILABLE SATURDAY MORNING. THESE TWO LEADERS COULD, IF WE DESIRED, JOIN WITH PRESIDENT CARTER AND GENERAL TORRIJOS FOR RELAXED AND INFORMAL TALK AFTER THE LATTER'S BREAKFAST. OR TIME COULD BE USED FOR BILATERALS WITH THESE TWO KEY LEADERS.

4. FOREIGN MINISTER, AS IS CLEAR FROM ABOVE, IS INCLINED TO THINK THAT BILATERAL TALKS BETWEEN LEADERS FRIDAY EVENING AND SATURDAY MORNING WOULD BE PREFERABLE TO MULTILATERAL SESSION THAT PRODUCED NOTHING NEW. HOWEVER, HE SAID, IF U.S. WISHES TO APPROACH LEADERS IN OTHER CAPITALS AND CAN WIN THEIR APPROVAL FOR MULTILATERAL SESSIONS, PANAMA WOULD HAPPILY GO ALONG WITH THAT OUTCOME. HIS
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ANALYSIS OF ALL THE LEADERS WHO ARE COMING: QUOTE THEY WANT VERY MUCH TO MEET WITH PRESIDENT CARTER. THEY WILL PROBABLY WANT TO RAISE ONE OR TWO SPECIFIC THINGS FOR HIS ATTENTION. AND THEY WILL WANT TO HAVE THEIR PICTURE TAKEN WITH HIM FOR THE NEXT DAY'S NEWSPAPERS. UNQUOTE.

5. FYI. MY OWN COMMENTS FOLLOW: I BELIEVE IT WILL BE DIFFICULT IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE TO GET ANY MEANINGFUL DISCUSSION OF THE FOUR MAJOR ITEMS LISTED IN THE BRIEF TIME ALLOTTED--ONE HOUR FRIDAY EVENING AND ONE HOUR SATURDAY MORNING. SECOND, WITH MEXICO ALMOST CERTAIN TO LEAVE EARLY AND JAMAICA AND COSTA RICA LIKELY TO DO SO, IT IS HARD TO SEE ANY SOLID GROUND BEING BROKEN ON MULTILATERAL APPROACHES. IF WE GO THE MULTILATERAL ROUTE--AND I TOLD PANAMA THAT WAS OUR PREFERRED COURSE AS NOTED IN REFTTEL--I THINK IT IS ALMOST INESCAPABLE THAT TALKS BE INFORMAL AND RELAXED. IT WOULD GIVE PRESIDENT CARTER OPPORTUNITY TO EMPHASIZE THOSE ELEMENTS IN U.S.-LATIN AMERICAN RELATIONS THAT ARE UPPERMOST IN HIS MIND; AND IT WOULD GIVE OTHER LEADERS SAME KIND OF OPPORTUNITY. PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANT, THESE CONTACTS WILL GIVE OUR PRESIDENT AND THE OTHERS A CHANCE TO GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER, OR TO KNOW EACH OTHER BETTER, TO ESTABLISH RAPPORT AND TRUST, AND LAY THE

GROUNDWORK FOR CLOSER RELATIONS IN FUTURE. THESE ACCOMPLISHMENTS, THOUGH MODEST, ARE NOT TO BE SNEEZED AT.

6. A FOOTNOTE: GONZALEZ-REVILLA TOLD ME IT IS LOPEZ MICHELSEN'S INTENTION TO BRING NEW PRESIDENT-ELECT WITH HIM FOR THE VISIT. THAT WOULD GIVE OUR PRESIDENT A CHANCE TO MEET A MAN WHO WILL BE A KEY LEADER IN THE AREA OVER COMING YEARS. JORDEN

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